

CITY OF MIAMI BEACH
Office of the City Manager
Letter to Commission No. _____

131-2004



To: Mayor David Dermer and
Members of the City Commission

Date: May 25, 2004

From: Jorge M. Gonzalez
City Manager

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Jorge", written over the printed name.

Subject: **ELECTROWAVE UPDATE**

This letter is to provide you an update on the City's Electrowave Shuttle Project. The good news is that shuttle ridership has increased significantly, as compared to last year; and the continued progress being made by the City in implementing recommendations of the 2003 Electrowave Shuttle Services Technical Assistance Study. More specific information is provided below:

1. Ridership Increase: 408,410 passengers rode the shuttle service in the first seven months of FY 2003-04, as compared to 335,982 in the same reporting period of previous fiscal year. This over 20% ridership increase was due to the following actions by the Miami Beach Transportation Management Association (MBTMA):
 - Route and scheduling adjustments that resulted in improved service frequency;
 - Installation of high visibility route signage/information;
 - Stronger community outreach; and
 - Continued quality bus maintenance services.
2. Purchase of Diesel Buses: Five (5) bus manufacturers responded to the City's Invitation to Bid # 21-03/04. The lowest/best bid will be submitted for Commission consideration and award, either at the May 26 or June 9, 2004 meeting. The related contract to be awarded will utilize \$1.6 million in available Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Section 5309 funds, and include the following purchases:
 - Six (6) diesel mini-buses equipped with automatic passenger counters, voice enunciator system, and GPS tracking system; and
 - The central hardware and software program (associated with the automatic counting system) which will be installed at the dispatching and MBTMA offices.

Only after this is in place will we be able to purchase and install similar counters in the existing electric buses, utilizing savings in the FY 2003-04 Electrowave Operating Budget.

3. New Branding for the Shuttle System: MBTMA secured \$50,000 in Florida Department of Transportation / South Florida Commuter Services funds to hire a professional advertising agency to develop and recommend the following for the shuttle service:
 - A new brand identity (new name & logo);
 - Brochure design with route map;

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- Exterior bus design (incorporating new name);
- Design of new shuttle signage; and
- Web site home page design.

Five advertising/marketing agencies responded to the MBTMA-issued Request for Qualifications. A selection committee of residents, City and State officials evaluated the proposals, heard presentations from the top two agencies, and made a recommendation. "re:group," a full-service advertising agency was hired by MBTMA on April 20, 2004.

Re:group is an agency from Ann Arbor, Michigan, which has over 20 years of experience in the advertising and marketing field. Their long list of clients includes the Ann Arbor Transportation Authority, Ben & Jerry's, March of Dimes, and Hush Puppies. Re:group will make a formal presentation of its recommendations for a new shuttle "branding" at the July 7, 2004 Commission Meeting, for your review, input, and approval.

4. Electrowave Negotiations with Miami-Dade Transit (MDT). On March 18, 2004, the Administration held a sixth meeting with MDT officials to further discussion on the following items:
- That a two-way loop service be implemented in South Beach, by merging the County's Route "W" with the City's Washington Route;
 - That MDT take a second look at assuming full responsibility over the proposed combined service; and
 - That MDT respond to the City's request as soon as possible.

MDT has decided, instead, to conduct a cost-benefit analysis of the above-mentioned proposals, and estimates to have a preliminary report by early July 2004.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any concerns or questions.


JG/RM/FB/RH/aj

- c: Robert Middaugh, Assistant City Manager
Fred Beckmann, Director of Public Works
Carmen Carlson, Senior Budget Analyst (Electrowave)
Amelia Johnson, Transportation Coordinator (files)
Gerald Schwartz, President, MBTMA Board of Directors
Judy Evans, MBTMA Executive Director

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